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SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NIGERIAN COURT DELIVERS SECOND CONVICTIONS UNDER
ANTI-TRAFFICKING LAW

REF: 2004 LAGOS 2394

1. Summary. The GON has convicted two individuals involved in a trafficking in persons ring in Kano state, northern Nigeria. Nigeria's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) expects at least one more conviction by year's end. Officials involved in the fight against trafficking, however, cite stifling court delays, untrained officers in the field, and difficulties educating the highest risk groups as major obstacles preventing more frequent and greater successes. End Summary.

2. In recognition of Nigeria's graduation from the Tier 2 Trafficking in Persons "Watch List," on July 27, the Ambassador hosted a reception to commend government officials and non-governmental representatives on their recent progress and to urge continued diligence in tackling this serious problem. At the reception, Nigeria's new Attorney General announced that two traffickers from Kano State had just been convicted and sentenced, one to a 2-year, one to a 3-year term, under the same law that sent a perpetrator from Edo State to jail last November (reftel). NAPTIP acted on information provided by the Saudi Consulate in Kano.

3. An agent confirmed that NAPTIP is targeting Kano and Edo States, the country's busiest transit and source points for trafficking victims, respectively. He added that NAPTIP had another clear-cut case from the area ready for prosecution, but court delays were expected to prevent a final decision for at least another three months.

4. Other efforts mentioned at the reception include expanding the operations of anti-trafficking immigration officials from the current twelve to twenty-four states. However, the newly appointed director of the program stated that there were still not enough resources to train and sensitize all field officers. Officials also asked for resources to help educate at risk populations in the country's villages and other hot spots for trafficking crimes.

5. Comment: The reception allowed the most important players from NAPTIP, customs and immigration, the office of the Presidency, and NGOs to get together and discuss combined efforts. In facing the obstacles ahead, cooperation is essential, and the energy exhibited at the meeting is promising. The Attorney General asked that USAID resume funding through Democracy and Governance programs to streamline the courts to allow for more convictions. Public Outreach programs also need to be expanded to reach at-risk Nigerians and help undereducated individuals understand that many sent away ostensibly to earn money, are being exploited, abused, and detained against their will. End Comment.

6. This cable was cleared by Embassy Abuja.